

CONFIDENTIAL



QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

28 February 1984

Dr 28/2

2 Wines,

.. I am circulating herewith a copy of the Parliamentary Boundary Commission for Wales' report on its 1983 review of European Parliament constituencies. Attached as an Annex to this letter is an analysis of the recommendations.

The House of Commons (Redistribution of Seats) Act 1949, as applied by Schedule 2 to the European Assembly Elections Act 1978, requires me to lay a report of a Parliamentary Boundary Commission before Parliament as soon as may be after receiving it, together with the draft of an Order in Council giving effect, with or without modifications, to the report's recommendations. The report is published when it is laid before Parliament. Two issues have to be decided:

- a. whether to make any modifications to the Commission's proposals, and
- b. how quickly to lay the draft Order and when to arrange the ensuing debates.

Modifications

... No representations have been made to the Commission or to me since 25 January 1984, when the Commission announced that it had no plans to revise its provisional recommendations. I may, however, receive representations about the division of the Borough of Neath and the County of West Glamorgan referred to in paragraph 5 of the attached Annex. Much would depend on the nature of any representations but in general I would not favour making modifications at this stage for the following reasons:

- a. Parliament should have the opportunity to discuss the Commission's recommendations as submitted to me;
- b. however strong the case, any proposed modifications should in fairness be published and representations invited; to do this would delay implementation of all the other recommendations;
- c. this particular issue was fully considered by the assistant Commissioner and the Commission.

/Timing

The Rt Hon Viscount Whitelaw, CH, MC

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Timing

I propose to lay the report and the draft Order on Tuesday 6 March. The draft Order will then have to be approved by both Houses and made by Her Majesty in Council. If the new constituencies are to be in force at the election on 14 June then the Order in Council must be made at the Privy Council meeting on 11 April. I understand that the English and Scottish Commissions are unlikely to report before 19 March at the earliest. This means that those report will have to be turned round quickly and debates on the draft Orders in Council held equally swiftly if they are to be ready for the Privy Council meeting on 11 April. There is no reason, however, to delay debating the Welsh report and draft Order and I suggest that the debate be arranged as soon as the Order has been cleared by the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments.

Unless I hear to the contrary by 2 March I shall assume that colleagues are content with the proposals in this letter.

I am copying this letter to the other members of H, to the Prime Minister and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary.

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PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES:
ANALYSIS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Paragraph 1(2) of Schedule 1 to the European Assembly Elections Act 1978 provides that there shall be four European Parliament constituencies in Wales. The Parliamentary Boundary Commission for Wales has no power to vary that number.

Background

2. The Commission was required to review the existing European constituencies as soon as the new parliamentary constituencies came into force in March 1983. The electorates of the present European constituencies ranged from 508,448 (4.9% below the electoral quota) in Mid and West Wales to 561,266 (4.9% above the electoral quota) in South-East Wales but the boundaries of three of the existing seats had to be aligned with those of the new parliamentary constituencies.

Overall view

3. The Commission's proposals reflect the fact that it tried to create as little disturbance as possible to the present seats. They leave the existing North Wales constituency unchanged and make the minimum number of changes necessary to the other three constituencies in order to meet the statutory requirements that each should comprise two or more whole parliamentary constituencies and have an electorate as near the electoral quota as is reasonably practicable having regard, where appropriate, to special geographical considerations.

4. The boundary of the present South-East Wales constituency has been altered slightly by including the remaining parts of 5 parliamentary constituencies currently contained in the European constituencies of Mid and West Wales and South Wales and by transferring parts of three others to the South Wales constituency. The only major alteration is to the boundary between the Mid and West Wales and South Wales constituencies, which currently divides the parliamentary constituency of Neath. The Commission propose that this parliamentary constituency should be placed in Mid and West Wales to produce electorates closer to the electoral quota, thereby dividing the County of West Glamorgan and the Borough of Neath between two European constituencies.

Contentious areas

5. There was a fair measure of support for the Commission's original proposals (now final recommendations) at the local inquiry in November 1983. This may well be reflected in the debates on the Commission's report. However, there may also be complaints about the Commission's rejection of a counter-proposal intended to avoid the division of the Borough of Neath and the County of West Glamorgan between constituencies. This counter-proposal produced electorates closer to the electoral quota than the Commission's recommendations but was rejected because it failed to take account of special geographical considerations (viz the barrier provided by the Brecon Beacons - see paragraph 41 of the report).

6. The electoral quota (i.e. average electorate on 25 April 1983, when notice of the review was published in the London Gazette) is 534,904. The electorates of the proposed constituencies are as follows:-

North Wales	518,646 (3.0% below the electoral quota)
Mid and West Wales	536,746 (0.3% above the electoral quota)
South East Wales	570,210 (6.6% above the electoral quota)
South Wales	514,012 (3.9% below the electoral quota)

These figures compare favourably with the Commission's recommendations in 1978, based on the 1977 electoral quota of 513,793, which were:-

North Wales	488,731 (4.9% below the electoral quota)
Mid and West Wales	486,916 (5.2% below the electoral quota)
South-East Wales (sic)	546,391 (6.3% above the electoral quota)
South Wales	533,134 (3.8% above the electoral quota)

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QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

14 March 1984

Dear Willie,

[Handwritten initials]

Thank you for your letter of 5 March about the Parliamentary Boundary Commissions' reviews of European Parliament constituencies.

I am presently working on the assumption that the English Commission will confirm its revised recommendations as its final recommendations and submit its report between 19 and 23 March, three weeks after the closing date for making representations about these recommendations. I would then aim to lay the report and draft Constituencies Order on Wednesday, 28 March at the latest in order to allow sufficient time for the draft Order to be scrutinised by the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments and to be debated in both Houses before the Privy Council meeting on 11 April.

This means that there will be very little time for consultation, but I hope to be able to circulate the report and draft Order to colleagues early in the week beginning 19 March.

You will now have seen George Younger's letter about the implementation of the Scottish Commission's recommendations, which were submitted on 7 March.

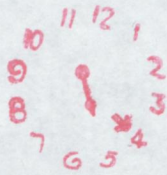
I am sending copies of this letter to the recipients of yours.

[Handwritten signature]

The Rt Hon Viscount Whitelaw, CH., MC.

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4 MAR 1984





PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

5 March 1984

*nb pm
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SB*

Dear Leon

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT CONSTITUENCIES - WALES

Thank you for your letter of 28 February in which you propose that you should go ahead on 6 March with publication of the Boundary Commission for Wales' report and an Order in Council.

I share your view that it is best to lay the report as submitted by the Commission, and you may take it that you have H Committee's approval to do so. I note that reports for England and Scotland are not expected until mid to late March. I imagine that means you will not be able to give colleagues much time for comment on those, so that if they do have any objections there will hardly be time to decide what to do about them. I note that your arguments for not modifying the Welsh proposals rested largely on general principles (which I would endorse); but I expect that in due course colleagues will want a few days in which to consider whether there are any local issues for which the English and Scottish Commissions have not done full justice. I would be grateful if you could let me know the latest time by which the relevant Orders in Council must be laid and whether it be at all feasible to fit in such consultation.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, to members of H Committee, to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*John
Britten*

The Rt Hon Leon Brittan QC MP

PARLIAMENT: Boundary Commission

Feb '81



Stamp 1981



Y SWYDDFA GYMREIG
 GWYDYR HOUSE
 WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2ER
 Tel. 01-233 3000 (Switsfwrdd)
 01-233 (Llinell Union)
 6106
 Oddi wrth Ysgrifennydd Gwladol Cymru

WELSH OFFICE
 GWYDYR HOUSE
 WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2ER
 Tel. 01-233 3000 (Switchboard)
 01-233 (Direct Line)
 6106
 From The Secretary of State for Wales

The Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards MP

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 Dms
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Dear Secretary of State,

Thank you for copying me your letter of 28 February to Willie Whitelaw about the report of the Boundary Commission for Wales on the Review of European Assembly Constituencies.

I am content with your proposals to lay the report and a draft order accepting the proposals without modification before Parliament on Tuesday, 6 March.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Willie Whitelaw, Geoffrey Howe and the other members of H.

*Yours sincerely,
 Lighton Davies.*

Approved by the Secretary of State and signed in his absence

The Rt Hon Leon Brittan QC MP
 Secretary of State for the Home Department